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ABSTRACT

Teachers of public speaking need to provide the educational leadership necessary for students to become responsible for their presentational interaction. Several instructional practices can help students re-position themselves in what they do with their presentational interaction to make it meaningful. For example, teachers can respond to student presentations in "meaning oriented" ways. Since how students respond to each other's presentations is crucial, it is also necessary to work with peer responses which encourage meaningful responses. Teachers should involve students in determining what purposes are worth pursuing in presentational interaction. When teachers make taking responsibility for meaningful interaction central in public speaking, they create a vision which contrasts with that of traditional instruction. This contrasting view does not provide easy-to-follow formulas for teaching or student evaluation. Although students may feel more anxious when asked to become accountable for their interaction, they can discover how they might count with others, which provides them with a reason for investing themselves in presentational interaction. (Four class handouts and 20 references are appended.) (MM)

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THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEANINGFUL PRESENTATIONAL INTERACTION

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We are responsible for how we influence our interaction. Accepting responsibility requires recognizing and owning the effects of our words and actions, on others and ourselves, and using this recognition to shape what we do next. The value of such a concern is demonstrated in Lau (1983), Hebert (1982), Hebert, Pace and Holdridge (1982), and Lau and Pace (1985) in their work on self-reflexivity. They indicate that only continual attention to what we are doing--repeated discoveries of what we are creating with our others in communication--will allow us to make interaction work.

Even though we like to think that we read others well and, in particular, imagine that we have a good sense of how we affect others, often this is not the case. Research findings from Hebert and Lau indicate that only rarely do individuals fully recognize the way they have affected others (Hebert, p. 92; Lau, p. 94-96). Moreover, Lau reports that in three out of four test samples, students were, on average, wrong more often than they were right in reading their affect on others (p. 94-95). In a recent study of the relationship between communication performance and communication satisfaction, Duran and Zakehi (1987) conclude:

Individuals are essentially impervious or unaware that their communicative performance affects the other's performance. . . These results indicate that in social situations individuals are not self-reflective of their communicative performance, which, in regard to the other's satisfaction, is crucial for positive outcomes. (p. 20)

Yet, despite the need for individual responsibility and the prevalence of individual irresponsibility, we neglect how we might teach people to become responsible for their interaction with others.

Educational Philosophy

A question we should address in teaching public speaking is "How can we provide the educational leadership necessary for students to become responsible in their presentational interaction?" Basic in responding to this question as Cell points out (1984), is the vision we create in our educational philosophy regarding the underlying dynamic of change. Shor and Freire (1987) argue that we best work with learner change when we see our students as engaged "in a permanent process of formation" through their interaction with others (p. 118). Our concern then, as teachers, is with how the classroom interaction we design for our students affects this self-forming process. As we become responsible for this influence, we can discover how to encourage and challenge our students to learn. Crucial is that we not fall victim to seeing the teaching of responsibility for interaction as the transference of knowledge. When we do this, we reduce "becoming responsible" to the concept of "responsibility" which transforms what we want into teach into an additional term our students are "supposed" know.

In order to teach responsibility we need to know what it is about presentational interaction that we want our students to hold themselves accountable for. The substance of what any interaction is, as phenomenologist such as Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues, is derived from the way in which the participants' bring their experience of interaction into meaning. There is no interaction independent of this phenomenon. "If a tree falls in the woods and no one is present to hear it, does the tree make a sound?" No, not in a way that counts for us nor, does a speech which fails to mean anything for its participants count for us. The purpose underlying presentational interaction is that speakers and listeners gain

from their experience of the event making it meaningful.

The implications of interaction becoming meaningful are profound. As Moreno (1953), Mead (1934), and Wilmot (1980) assert, our sense of who we are is bound up with our interaction with others: there is no independent self. Moreno characterizes this relationship from the perspective that we give birth to who we are through our interaction with others. Whereas, Gusdorf (1965) points out that our speaking to others creates a means of inserting ourselves in the world with the purpose of offering something of value to others. Our challenge, as Gusdorf sees it, is that, "Each of us is charged with realizing himself in a language, a personal echo of the language of all which represents his contribution to the human world" (p. 76). This can only happen as there are others listening who can make what we say meaningful.

What we want our students to learn is to empower themselves as contributors to meaningful presentational interaction. They acquire this power through becoming responsible for what emerges from their interaction for themselves and their participating others. What we wish for them to transcend is the capacity to influence our presentational interaction in ways that bore both us and our others or, worse, to influence our interaction in ways that are harmful. Important in this pedagogy is to challenge students to take charge of their own self-change as learners. Dewey (1938) comments:

There is I think, no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process. (p. 77)

As students discover ways of taking their own learning initiatives, they acquire what they

will need most in their presentational interaction outside the classroom.

Instructional Practices

In choosing instructional practices, whether we are aware of it or not, we necessarily begin to see ourselves in a particular way as to how we are going to make these practices work. Valuable in becoming aware of this is to consider what controlling metaphor is implicit in how we want to bring this practice to life in the classroom. As teachers we have traditionally made for ourselves the expert roles of information dispensers and performance physicians. Though these metaphors help us solidify and protect our authority in the classroom, we should notice the resultant effect this has on our students. In creating ourselves as information dispensers we position our students as unknowing recipients who passively learn by acquiring the additional information we think that they need to have in order to speak well. In creating ourselves as performance physicians we diagnose the extent to which our speakers have assimilated this information into their presentational performances which positions them as unknowing patients awaiting our prescriptive word on what they have to do to get better.

Instead, we might use the making of art as a metaphor to envision our educational practice as Shor and Freire (p. 115-119) and Richards (1964, pp. 40-43) suggest. Such a view helps us see that, above all else, as teachers we are creators. Moreno (1971) saw the metaphor of creator as vital because it puts individuals in charge of their interaction which includes who they become in it and what this has to do with who others become. Thus, as artists, the function of our teaching is to give form to interaction which enables our students to see themselves as artistic creators of their presentational interaction.

The instructional practices presented here are meant to help students re-position themselves in what they do with their presentational interaction in making it meaningful. As artistic educators we need to "feel each suggestion out" and alter it, or even omit it, based on our individual visualization of ourselves initiating this suggestion, and our sense of how our students will respond. Instructional practices which offer beginning ventures for initiating responsibility for meaningful presentational interaction are introduced as "Trial Suggestions." Instructional practices which are involved more fundamentally in teaching a responsibility for meaning are introduced as "Committed Suggestions."

Trial Suggestions

These are practices we might use in the classroom as primary tests to explore some of the implications of introducing a responsibility for meaningful interaction. The first suggestion discusses supplemental "meaning oriented" ways for us as teachers of respond to student presentations. The second suggestion discusses ways of working with peer responses which encourage meaningful responses.

1. Teacher Meaning Oriented Responses on Speaker Critiques.

Two questions we might address ourselves to comment on in responding to our students' presentations are: "What seemed to help most in contributing something meaningful to your audience of others?" and "How might you have engaged yourself differently as a presenter to make a more meaningful contribution to the others you interacted with in your presentation?" As difficult as it is to comment on what we think is most meaningfully engaging in our students' presentations, until we find ways of initiating dialogue with them in this regard, it is not likely that our students will take our efforts seriously. Moreover, making these comments useful depends on our developing sense of

how our students respond to what we are saying. Only as we recognize the futility of some of our comments, can we discover the need to abandon them in lieu of more helpful ways of responding to our students.

2. Fellow Student Meaning Oriented Responses

Obtaining peer responses to student speeches is a common educational practice we use primarily to help speakers develop audience awareness. However, what often happens is that this exercise soon becomes an obligatory task generating perfunctory, almost thoughtless, responses which mean little to speakers and listeners. Nevertheless, because classroom audiences are made up almost entirely of fellow students, the responses of student listeners are vital to speakers' discovering how their presentations affect others.

What we need are engaging ways to involve students so that their responses to fellow speakers matter. We might ask listeners to indicate which places in a speaker's presentation seemed especially valuable and why, as well as which places seemed especially meaningless and why. We might ask speakers to provide a question regarding their presentation that they want listener responses to. And, we might invite speakers to reflect on the responses they received in order to explore, in writing or in class discussion, which listener responses they found most valuable. As teachers, crucial in managing these listener responses is monitoring how listeners are responding to speakers and letting listeners know what we think of the usefulness of their responses.

Asking students to choose five peers they wish to have responses from might also influence listeners and speakers in overcoming their experience of peer responses as a disengaged drudgery. Basic to Moreno's work in sociometry (1953) is the position that exercising the choice of who one interacts with positively affects the quality of the

subsequent interaction. As students commit themselves in their choices, this positions them to invest more in taking into account how individual audience members will respond in their presentational preparation. Because respondents know that the speaker specifically chose them as an individual and not others, they are more inclined to invest themselves in creating a useful response for the speaker than if the request is experienced as merely a teacher directed command. And when speakers do get the responses back, because they chose who they most wanted responses from, they are more inclined to seriously consider what someone else besides the teacher thinks about their presentation.

Committed Suggestions

Because these suggestions displace much of our automatic adherence to informative, demonstrative, and persuasive speeches, they require a significant commitment to a responsibility for creating meaningful presentational interaction. Despite the good pedagogical intentions behind our traditional speech assignments, their fundamental liability is that they impose prototypical purposes which dictate how speakers will choose to think about their presentations. In choosing for speakers their reason for speaking, we take away their responsibility to decide for themselves what purposes should drive them in their presentational interaction. Moreover, in framing the purpose of our speech assignments, we reduce the potential dynamic of the speaking moment in the classroom to simulated preparation for future "real life" presentational speaking. Rarely are occasions for presentational speaking outside the classroom and forensic competitions framed as informative, demonstrative, and persuasive. We could also observe at our professional conventions that we have found little use for these speech prototypes. Further, it seems unlikely that in the future we will see much reason to suggest something such as

informative presentations on the opening day, demonstrative presentations on the second day, and persuasive presentations on the closing day.

The suggestions offered here involve students in determining what purposes are worth pursuing in presentational interaction. Moreover, the presentational assignments which are suggested give presentational speaking its full status as an interpersonally experienced, live rhetorical event. Taking charge of how we can bring our immediate rhetorical context into meaningful communication is central to our presentational interaction outside the classroom and we should make it so inside the classroom. The first instructional theme asks students to explore what is involved in creating presentational interaction that matters. The second theme involves students in exploring how speakers and listeners become different through their participation in presentational interaction.

Creating Something That Matters

In re-casting what is important in presentational interaction with students, I introduce the theme that good presentational speaking happens when speaker and listeners create something that matters from their interaction. Though I do present what I think most influences this interpersonal phenomenon of a presentation mattering, I choose my speaking moments carefully. I have found it most useful to first challenge students to develop and express in class their own opinions of what makes presentational interaction matter for them.

The way I structure this challenge is to pose questions for students to reflect on and commit themselves to in brief, approximately one minute, "informal" presentational speeches. I ask students to reflect specifically on presentational speeches they have listened to in order to choose and describe one which stands out because it mattered to them

as listeners. Then, I ask them to reflect on their experience as the person who is expressing themselves to others. I ask them to describe an experience in which they felt they expressed something which mattered most.

Working with these questions creates a classroom interaction in which students' ability to think about themselves as presentational speakers and listeners is made basic. It's been my experience that nurturing classroom interaction which genuinely values students as responsible presentational participants requires continually inventing contexts which involve them in building and discussing their own "expertise". These questions also enable students to acquire a sense how others think about interaction that has mattered to them. Further, allowing students to begin this discussion gives me a sense of where they are in their thinking which is useful in introducing my own thoughts in this regard.

As a further means of helping students better understand what distinguishes a presentational interaction as mattering, I often ask them to speak on their experience in listening to a presentation which stood out because it did not matter for them as listeners. Almost universally they describe experiences in listening to presentations which they felt were boring. Building on this concept of "boredom" I have found it especially helpful to ask students to experience giving deliberately boring presentations. Even though at first students remark how easy this assignment seems, later they comment on its difficulty. It seems that in trying to bore others, speakers face the troubling ever-present possibility that listeners might experience their presentation as boring.

Necessary to students learning to create meaningful presentational interaction is their involvement in making this happen in the classroom. I approach this with a

presentational assignment entitled "Creating Something that Matters" (See Appendix A:

Creating Something that Matters (Assignment Handout) and Appednix B: The Role of

Invention in Creating Presentational Interaction that Matters (Explanatory Handout)).

Because of the difficulty students experience initially in finding that they can not translate the handout into "knowing what it is that they have to do," I distribute it at the end of class and urge them to begin working with it only when they can make an hour-and-a-half of reflective time to think about it. Key in this presentational interaction assignment are the responses speakers create in preparation for why this presentation will matter for them and why they think this will matter to their listeners (See assigned preparatory questions in Appendix A).

In responding to student presentations, I reflect on how their presentation mattered to me as well as my sense of how it mattered to the other student listeners. In structuring my responses I provide an overall sense of how well their presentations seemed to work including how I think this compared with their earlier informal presentational efforts. I make specific mention of what seemed to help this become a presentation that mattered along with ways I think that they might have made their presentation matter more. I also comment on how I thought their preparatory responses to why their presentation matters seemed related to how well their presentation worked. Often I find a connection between a speaker's lack of engagement in their presentation and the absence of convincing reasons why tackling this presentation matters to them. Likewise, speakers who seem to offer their listeners little that is meaningful to work with usually are weak in how they envisioned their presentation would matter to their audience.

Important in choosing what to respond to and the way in which I phrase my responses

is my sense of how this particular student will work with my comments. For example, rather than universally commenting on eye contact, I consider how useful this observation will be for the speaker. If I perceive the speaker as extremely frightened, pointing out that they don't make eye contact with their audience seems of little value and may even contribute to their already exaggerated critical self-consciousness. Instead, I may comment on what they might gain from willing themselves to identify more with specific people in their audience and finding ways to care that these listeners understand them.

Underlying this means of responding to student presentations is a contrasting philosophical view from that of our traditional pedagogy. Traditionally, we as teachers, have valued "objectivity" in our presentational responses because it gives students an accounting of how well they did in their presentations independent of possible viewer bias. Our belief is that to the extent that we can be "objective," our evaluations will be fair and provide the most universally applicable feedback for preparing our students for the presentational situations they will face in the future. Recent studies by Bock and Bock (1984), Bock and Munro (1977) and Bock and Saine (1975) build on this presumed value of "evaluational objectivity" in their research efforts to discover the harmful influencing factors of evaluational bias. Whereas, the contrasting view offered here is that since only experiencing subjects constitute what a presentation becomes, objective evaluations are seen as removing what is most important from interaction: how participants make it mean what it does. Hence, what we need are evaluational responses which help speakers understand how their presentation is experienced and brought into meaning. Only then can our students learn to take charge of making their speeches meaningful interactions.

It's been my experience that crucial to students learning to become better presentational speakers and listeners is what happens in how students respond to each others presentations. Yet, it is my sense that what usually emerges from classroom audiences is an emptied atmosphere of relatively courteous but unresponsive listening. Deprived of listeners who meaningfully respond, speakers are unable to learn how their work affects their audience. One of the best ways I have found of inviting meaningful responses from student listeners is to have each student choose the classmate's presentation which mattered to them the most and explain why in a brief speech for the class. Another possibility is to ask listeners to carefully reflect on speakers' presentations in order to pose questions which they feel, if answered, would help them as listeners make these presentations more meaningful. These questions should be given to the intended speakers so that they can decide which questions would be most worthwhile to address in a brief follow-up presentation. Further, as teachers it is helpful to monitor this through asking students for signed copies of the questions that they submitted for their fellow speakers.

Making a Difference

The following theme that I introduce in my class is that of "making a difference." Rather than as a theme separate from "creating something that matters," this theme emphasizes that participants only make presentational interaction meaningful as they become different through their experience as speakers and listeners. "Making a difference" confronts students with taking responsibility for their role in contributing to presentational interaction which constructively changes its participants. It contextualizes change as equally important to speakers and listeners, self and others, and

clarifies the value of such change as based upon the benefit which those participating realize.

In order to involve students in thinking about how presentational interaction might make a difference, I raise some questions for them to address. I ask them to develop opinions from their own experience explaining how they "know" a presentation makes a difference from when it does not. Further, I ask them to consider examples of the possibility that a presentational interaction might appear to make a significant difference for us as listeners when a more careful look reveals it does not: such as when we get caught up in a dynamic presentation which comes to hold no value for us. Also, I ask students to generate examples of when a presentation made a difference which seemed good to participants but was later viewed as bad: such as when an audience is persuasively moved to act for a supposed benefit, yet their actions proved harmful to either themselves or others: such as when Nazi rhetors rallied support to benefit the people of Germany.

Turning the initiative for the question asking back to the students. I ask them to take charge of posing their own questions concerning what they want to know about making a difference in presentational interaction. Engaging students in a different manner, I ask them to pose pragmatic questions which would help them in working with their own presentation. I request that they "Write questions you feel you could benefit the most from an 'expert discussion' by your classmates and professor in order for you to make your presentational interaction make a difference." I make this a take home assignment from which I select those questions which seem the best catalysts for productive dialogue. Dividing the class into groups, I give each a different set of discussion questions and ask them to collaborate in generating "expert advice." In order to open discussion to the rest

of the class, I ask groups to present their questions and their expert advice to the class as a whole.

A few sets of the questions I have used in past are:

1. How do I get a feel for my audience? How can I use my sense of this in preparing what I have to say? How can I use my sense of this while I am actually speaking?
2. How can I give myself the confidence to make my presentations work? Where would I need to begin if I felt this was my greatest obstacle as a speaker?
3. How can I relate my inner-most feelings about my topic without losing my objectivity? How do I handle my emotions better about something I have strong feelings about? How can I make a speech on a controversial topic such as religion into something that will not offend others?
4. How do I know when its a good idea to use visual aids? If I do use them, what is most important to keep in mind so that they "best" contribute to my presentation?

Culminating this theme is the interaction which results from students' presentational efforts to "Make a Difference" (See Appendix C: Making A Difference (Assignment Handout) and The Role of Constructive Change In Creating Presenting Interaction that Makes a Difference (Explanatory Handout)). I handle responses to student presentations by myself and peer respondents in a similar manner as I did in "Creating Something that Matters." A key procedural difference with this presentational assignment is the brief (5 to 10 min.) pre-speech conferences I have with each student in class to discuss their presentational preparation.

I open the conference by asking students for their response to the comments I have made on their previous presentations. I ask if they felt my comments were "on or off

target" and if they have any questions that might help them understand how I work with their presentations. Most important is the discussion which emerges from the student prepared responses to "How do you hope tackling this presentation constructively changes you?" and "How do you hope this presentation will make a difference to your audience?" Though I ask to see students written responses to these questions, I ask them, without looking at their written response, to convince me that their presentation will make a difference for themselves and their audience. I ask students to initiate this interaction with their best persuasive "pitch." If I feel unconvinced, I raise questions to help them explore how their presentation might make a difference. If I remain unconvinced by their responses, I ask them to re-think how this might make a difference or to consider another presentational subject for which they might generate more compelling reasons.

Conclusion

When we make a responsibility for meaningful interaction central in public speaking, we create a vision which contrasts with that of our "usual" instruction. This contrasting view does not provide easy-to-follow formulas for how we should teach or even for what we should look for in our students' presentations. Because responsibility for meaningful interaction is burdensome, students often feel more anxious when we ask them to become accountable for their interaction, than when we spell out our behavioral expectations of them. Yet responsibility also empowers. As students work with its challenge, they discover how they might count with others, which provides them with a felt reason for investing themselves in presentational interaction. What results is a classroom with the potential to become live with purpose. As teachers, what we might discover is that students do have something worth saying to us and to each other.

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Appendix A

Creating Something that Matters

(Assignment Handout)

As speakers, create a presentational interaction that matters with the individuals who make up your audience.

As listeners, create something that matters from the presentational interaction other speakers initiate.

Specifications: Create a 3 - 6 min. original presentation on your assigned speaking date. Bring an outline to hand in the day of your presentation (include reference to all of the ideas you are going to present). With the exception of a full script of what you want to say, you may use whatever you wish as a speaker's guide.

Presentational Preparation Assignment: Hand in one class prior to your speaking date your response to the questions below. (Answer on separate paper so that you can adequately develop and communicate your thinking.)

1. How is it that tackling this presentation matters to you? (In other words, What do you hope to gain from tackling this presentation? Or, How is it useful for you to give form to this presentation?)
2. How do you hope this presentation will constructively matter to your others you are speaking with?

Appendix B

The Role of Invention in Creating Presentational Interaction that Matters

(Explanatory Handout)

Invention involves what we create in our preparation for our involvement in the live moment of a presentational interaction. It includes our thoughts and feelings in groping for what we want to give life to in what we have to say. It includes committing ourselves repeatedly, through our choices to the emerging form of what we will bring forth in our presentational interaction with our listeners. Honest reflection on how we work with inventing what we have to say as presentational speakers has much to do with how strong we become in managing our presentational interaction.

What do we think about the choices we have made in the past concerning what we invented to say to our audience of others? Did we make good use of our choices? Did we choose to create something that in retrospect we can say to ourselves without kidding-- "more than anything else this is what we wanted to give expressive form to?" Did we have a sense that in inventing what we were to say that we were involving ourselves in an activity that was more important than any other activity that we might engage ourselves in? Or, did we choose something so deep for ourselves that we felt entirely overwhelmed? Or, was our underlying reason for our choice of what to say really a superficial concern for finding whatever would be easiest to talk about for the required minutes?

William E. Coles Jr. reportedly once made a comment on the invention process in writing which is equally applicable to speaking. Coles remarked, "Bad writing is that which says only what the writer already knew how to say." Moreover, choosing to invent

something to say to others that is important to us but is also something that we don't understand as well as would like has the potential to become a meaningful struggle for us. Simone Weil (1977) has said, "If we concentrate our attention on trying to solve a problem of geometry, and if at the end of an hour we are no nearer to doing so than at the beginning, we have nevertheless been making progress each minute of that hour in another more mysterious dimension." (p. 45) Ultimately, we may learn much from this struggle which gives us significant insight into what we might create to say for others.

The question we need to address is, "How can we invent something to talk about with our others that best gives form to something valuable for ourselves as well as to our others?" Perhaps, what distinguishes poor expression most is I. A. Richard's (1955) notion that, poor expression is expression not attempting anything worth trying (p. 122). In reflecting on our past presentations, what we should look at is how we have approached creating something worth trying for ourselves, and for our audience. This honest reflection provides perspective for our immediate challenge of deciding what is worth inventing for the presentation which stands before us.

Appendix C

Making a Difference

(Assignment handout)

As a speaker, give form to presentational interaction which makes a difference in in the sense of providing for constructive change for yourself and your audience.

As a listener, reach towards the speaker and what they have to say in order to become open to the possibility of constructively changing as you listen to and reflect on others' presentations.

Specifications: Bring life to a 4 - 6 min. original presentation on your assigned speaking date. Hand in an outline of your presentation at this time which includes reference to all of the ideas you are going to present.

An individual conference will be scheduled with me to discuss your presentation. In conference I will ask for your written responses to the questions below. And, I will ask you to present this verbally (without reading what you had written) in an effort to convince me that this presentation will constructively change you and your audience.

Presentational Preparation Assignment (Please respond to the questions below on a separate sheet):

1. How will tackling this presentation constructively change you? How will you benefit from finding different ways to think about this subject?
2. How do you hope this presentation will make a difference to your others in the audience? How might they benefit from what you have to offer?

Appendix D

The Role of Constructive Change

in Creating Presentational Interaction that Makes a Difference

(Explanatory Handout)

Creating presentational interaction that makes a difference requires change. As speakers, what we present only begins to make a difference for the listeners we are interacting with, as they change in some way through their response to the interaction we have initiated with them. Likewise, what we present only begins to make a difference for ourselves as speakers as we change through our work with our presentation. This change is good for our listeners when it enables them to think differently and act differently in ways that constructively empower them in how they relate with something. This change is good for us as speakers, when through the process of invention and expression, we reach a different place in our thinking which makes us stronger and better able to respond. Equally valuable is the change we may experience as speakers in coming to know ourselves as capable of bringing something worthwhile to others in what we have to say. Avoiding the possibility of us changing through our presentational interaction reduces our activity to a "waste of time." "a waste of life."

A reaching forth on our part as listeners in a way that invites the possibility of constructive change is something we usually overlook. Without us engaging ourselves in the moment and our active work at creating something different for ourselves which is of value from another's presentation, there can be no encounter: no real interaction. As individual listeners, we make an essential contribution to a presentational encounter. In failing to take responsibility for reaching forth to the speaker and the possibility of us

changing, we turn another's effort to touch us into an empty gesture. We reduce what might have been to a performance better delivered in seclusion, because there the speaker would be free of the illusion of communicating with someone else. Failing to take the initiative to make a difference for ourselves with what our speakers have to say, we rob the speaker of a possibility to matter. Each failure is the death of a live reason for speaking. Listening demands an active effort to reach beyond our own self-centeredness in order to create something of value from what another has to say: more than anything, it is an investment of faith in the speaker, the encounter, and ultimately in our own ability to create something for ourselves as listeners. Listening is a vital way we contribute to another person's emergence.